

REMARKS

Reconsideration of this application as amended is respectfully requested. Claims 16 and 18 have been amended without adding new matter. Claims 1-19 remain pending. The remarks below in connection with claim rejections refer to the claims as amended herein.

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 112

Claims 16-19 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for including the term “resolving.”

Applicant has amended claims 16 and 18 to address the reason for rejection and respectfully submits that the section 112 rejection is overcome.

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 16-19 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,446,685 to Holst (“Holst”). Applicant respectfully submits that claims 16-19 are not obvious in view of Holst.

Holst discloses a modified CAM cell in which a match-line-discharging match transistor 96 may be decoupled from ground (in one embodiment by turning off a match sense transistor 98 coupled between the match transistor and ground and in another embodiment by raising a pulsed ground line 108 that is coupled to the source of the match transistor 96) to enable bit lines (BL and L_{BL}) to be set up for match operation at the same time that the match line 36 coupled to the drain of the match transistor is pre-charged (Holst col. 8, line 4 - col. 9, line 23). Holst does not disclose or suggest comparing priority number bits stored within a column of priority number storage elements coupled to a column of compare circuits, much less “*concurrently de-asserting a match line in the first column of compare circuits and outputting a second priority number signal on a next priority line coupled to a second column of compare circuits, the second priority number signal having one of the at least two logical signal levels based, in part, on a comparison of priority number bits stored within a second column of priority number storage elements coupled to the second column of compare circuits*” as recited in claim 16. Accordingly, applicant submits that neither claim 16 nor dependent claim 17 would have been obvious in view of Holst.

Claim 18 recites, in part:

means for concurrently de-asserting a match line in the first column of compare circuits and outputting a second priority number signal on a next

priority line coupled to a second column of compare circuits, the second priority number signal having one of the at least two logical signal levels based, in part, on a comparison of priority number bits stored within a second column of priority number storage elements coupled to the second column of compare circuits

Applicant submits that, for at least the reasons given with respect to claim 16, Holst does not disclose or suggest the above-recited limitation of claim 18 and therefore that neither claim 18 nor dependent claim 19 would have been obvious in view Holst.

Allowed Claims

Applicant acknowledges the allowance of claims 1-15.

In Conclusion

Applicant respectfully submits that all pending claims are in condition for allowance. If a telephone interview would be helpful in any way, the examiner is invited to call the undersigned attorney.

If an extension of time is due in connection herewith, applicant hereby petitions for such extension of time.

Authorization is hereby given to charge deposit account 501914 for any fee due in connection herewith, including any fee due for extension of time.

Respectfully submitted,

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